



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

SEP 16 2008

Cheryl Walsh
Director of Vocational Rehabilitation
State of Alaska
Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
801 West 10th Street, Suite A
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Ms. Walsh:

The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) acknowledges your letter of June 4, 2008, transmitting the State Plan for the Title I State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program and Supplement for the Title VI-B Supported Employment (SE) Services Program in the form of a preprint of affirmative assurances and required attachments on behalf of the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in compliance with Sections 101(a) and 625 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended* (the act).

The State Plan, in the form of a preprint of affirmative assurances and required attachments, along with the Certifications Regarding Lobbying for both the VR and SE programs, was reviewed to ensure conformity with statutory provisions of the act, implementing regulations and the administrative requirements of RSA. Based on this review, the State Plan is approved. In accordance with the approval of the State Plan materials, RSA is making available to Alaska its FY 2009 Title I, Part B, and Title VI, Part B, grant awards.

If you or your staff have questions related to this review or the approval of the FY 2009 State Plan, please contact your state liaison, Pamela Hodge, at 202-245-7388 or Pamela.Hodge@ed.gov.

400 MARYLAND AVE. S.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20202
www.ed.gov

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Page 2 – Ms. Walsh

We appreciate your timely submission of this information and your continuing efforts to assist individuals with disabilities to achieve high quality employment outcomes.

Sincerely,

Beverlee Stafford
for

Edward Anthony, Ph.D.
Delegated the authority to perform
The functions of Commissioner for the
Rehabilitation Services Administration

cc: Ron Boynton
Pamela Hodge

Sarah Palin, Governor

801 West 10th Street, Suite A
Juneau, AK 99801
V/TTY: (907) 465-2814
Fax: (907) 465-2856

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

June 4, 2008

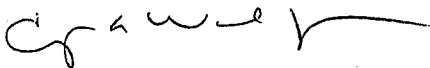
Edward Anthony, Ph.D.
U.S. Department of Education
Mail Stop 2800, PCP Room 5146
7100 Old Landover Road
Landover, MD 20785-1605

Dear Dr. Anthony,

Enclosed is the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's FY2009 State Plan.
Included per the instructions of RSA-IM-08-02 are:

- Attachment 4.2(c) - Summary of Input and Recommendations Provided by the State Rehabilitation Council;
- Attachment 4.10 - Comprehensive System of Personnel Development;
- Attachment 4.11(b) - Annual Estimates;
- Attachment 4.11(c)(4) - Goals and Plans for Distribution of the Title VI, Part B, Funds;
- Attachment 4.11(e)(2) - Evaluation and Reports of Progress;
- Lobbying Certifications; and
- Section I of the preprint.

Sincerely,



Cheryl A. Walsh, Director
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation



Ron Boynton, Chair
Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities



Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

FY2009 State Plan



**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
& WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Department of Labor & Workforce Development**

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the Supplemental
for the Supported Employment Services Program In accordance with Title I, Section
101(a) and Title VI, Section 625 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

OMB Control Number: 1820-0500, Expiration Date: January 31, 2010

Submitted To:

U.S. Department of Education
Mail Stop 2800, PCP Room 5146
7100 Old Landover Road
Landover, MD 20785-1605

Cheryl Walsh, Director

Ron Boynton, Chair, Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of
People with Disabilities

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Attachment 4.11(b)	Annual Estimates of Individuals to be Served and Costs of Services
Attachment 4.11(c)(4)	Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
Attachment 4.11(e)(2)	Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities


CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

Applicants must review the requirements for certification regarding lobbying included in the regulations cited below before completing this form. Applicants must sign this form to comply with the certification requirements under 34 CFR Part 82, "New Restrictions on Lobbying." This certification is a material representation of fact upon which the Department of Education relies when it makes a grant or enters into a cooperative agreement.

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 34 CFR Part 82, for persons entering into a Federal contract, grant or cooperative agreement over \$100,000, as defined at 34 CFR Part 82, Sections 82.105 and 82.110, the applicant certifies that:

- (a) No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any Federal grant, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal grant or cooperative agreement;
- (b) If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal grant or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions;
- (c) The undersigned shall require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants and contracts under grants and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT State of Alaska Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME State Supported Employment Services Program under Title VI, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE Cheryl Walsh, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	
SIGNATURE 	DATE 6/12/2008

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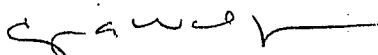
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As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I hereby certify that the applicant will comply with the above certification.

NAME OF APPLICANT State of Alaska Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	PR/AWARD NUMBER AND / OR PROJECT NAME Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program under Title I, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE Cheryl Walsh, Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	
SIGNATURE 	DATE 6/12/2008

STATE Alaska GENERAL BLIND COMBINED X

STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

STATE: Alaska

AGENCY: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL BLIND X COMBINED

SECTION 1: STATE CERTIFICATIONS

- 1.1 The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (name of designated state agency or designated state unit) is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under Title VI, Part B of the Act.
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (name of designated state agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan.
- 1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law.
- 1.7 The Director of the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (title of state officer) has the authority under state law to receive, hold, and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement.

- 1.8 The Director of the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (title of state officer) has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services.
- 1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.


(Signature) Cheryl Walsh, Director

6/12/2008 Director, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
(Date) (Title)

- 1 Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.
- 2 Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- 3 All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
- 4 No funds under Title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.
- 5 Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.
- 6 No funds under Title VI, Part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Act.
- 7 Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

Attachment 4.2(c)

Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

The State of Alaska has a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) consistent with Section 105 the Act and 34 CFR 361.17. In Alaska, the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities (GCERPD) serves as the SRC. The GCERPD holds quarterly face-to-face meetings at various locations throughout the State thus enabling them to gain a comprehensive, first hand understanding of the statewide vocational rehabilitation program.

GCERPD accomplished the following in FY2007:

1. Conducted public forums in both urban and rural areas of the State garnering consumer satisfaction with the services of ADVR;
2. Collaborated with Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education and the SILC to support legislation as identified through the Aging and Disability Policy Summit;
3. Met with new legislators to educate them on the SRC and ADVR;
4. Sponsored the Governor's Annual Disability Award Ceremony acknowledging individuals and employers who promote the employment of individuals with disabilities;
5. Made presentations to employers and employer groups such as Rotary and Chambers of Commerce to promote employment of people with disabilities.
6. Hosted an information table at the annual Alaska Special Education Director's Conference;
7. Conducted outreach efforts to recruit new members to the GCERPD;
8. AT committee members met with staff of the Special Education Service Agency to discuss assessment and use by students with disabilities;
9. Assisted in hosting the first national AT conference in Alaska;
10. AT sub-committee members worked closely with ADVR in writing policies and procedures for individuals applying for AT loans.
11. Developed a process to ensure consumer satisfaction is assessed.

Recommendations made to ADVR by the GCERPD

There were no specific recommendations made by the GCERPD to ADVR FY2007:

Analysis of Consumer Satisfaction

In accordance with 34 CFR 361.17 (h) (4), the GCERPD reviews and analyzes the effectiveness of and the consumer satisfaction with the vocational rehabilitation services. The consumer satisfaction information is collected through public forums, from surveys which are available in all VR offices statewide to all individuals at any time during the VR process, and through a consumer satisfaction survey which is mailed to all consumers closed from plan. The latter was introduced in FY2007 with the formal GCERPD recommendations to be included in the FY2008 report.

Preliminary results of the mailed survey indicate 85% of the respondents were overall satisfied with the services they received from ADVR and 91% would refer a friend or relative to ADVR. The results also show that 81% of the former ADVR knew about their appeal rights and only 66% was aware of the Client Assistance Program. ADVR is not waiting until the GCERPD make a formal recommendation around this issue and is working to improve these numbers.

A common theme at public testimony is the commitment of the ADVR staff that provide direct services. The continued need for services in rural Alaska across agencies was also expressed.

FY2008 Goals

Assistive Technology Sub-Committee

1. Promote early assessment, evaluation, identification and use of AT.

Objective: Disseminate AT information statewide.

Action Items:

- Recommend to full Governor's Committee to include AT information on their website.
- Explore possibility of adding a direct link to State of Alaska's website on AT information.
- Ensure AT information is included on the new "Network for Care" (IL) statewide website.
- Ensure new AT national brochures that will be coming soon are modified for Alaskan use and disseminated.

2. Develop strategies to increase resources to enable consumers to access and acquire appropriate AT.

Objective A: Develop additional AT funding resources.

Action Item:

- Work with Governor's Committee's Legislative Subcommittee to lobby for additional AT funding.

Objective B: Develop a statewide AT coalition.

Action Item:

- Identify key partners for this coalition.

- Facilitate meeting to develop this statewide coalition to explore implementing best practices.
3. Ensure one Governor's Committee meeting per year focuses on AT issues and development.

Objective: Demonstrate the new "Network for Care" statewide website.

Resource, Evaluation and Planning Sub-Committee

1. Governor's Committee member recruitment and training.
 - Develop strategy to identify potential members.
 - Department of Labor (Legislative liaison special asst.)
 - Past award recipients.
 - DVR recommendations.
 - Monitor receipt of potential member applications.
 - Establish working relationship with the Division of Boards and Commissions.
 - Orient new members.
 - Identify mentors from current Committee to pair with new members.
2. Work with DVR to develop a comprehensive resource plan which both meets the needs of the Committee and reflects the related cost of DVR staff support time.
3. Review Bylaws and recommend amendments as needed.
4. Provide recommendations to DVR in regards to new or proposed policies, procedures and/or the state plan.
5. Identify method(s) of delivery for consumer satisfaction survey between the division's administrative and field offices.

Employment and Legislative Sub-Committee

1. Encourage employers to hire individuals with disabilities.
2. Make presentations to employer groups and provide information about the DVR and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs and the benefits of hiring people with disabilities.
3. Work with DVR and develop an improved website link.
4. Actively promote employer partnerships.
5. Host the annual awards ceremony.
6. Collaborate with the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education to address employment priorities.

7. Actively work to update the statute that limits the number of seats on the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities.
8. Obtain language for the legislation and identify a legislator to support and introduce the legislation.
9. Identify the Committee's priorities as bills are introduced through working and collaboration with legislative information offices, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the State Independent Living Council.
10. Visit and educate new and veteran legislators about the Committee, what we do, who we are, the legislative priorities we support and the purpose of DVR.

Attachment 4.10

Comprehensive System for Personnel Development (CSPS) Plan

In recognition of the complexity of assuring quality service while responding to the demands of a changing environment, the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (ADVR) employs a continuous improvement approach to organizational development. Founded upon a strategy of building organizational capacity through the realization of individual potential, the key components of the model include: continuous learning, developing capacity through personal and professional development; and the belief that when employees are trained with the skills and abilities to make decisions about the management of their work, the result is greater organizational effectiveness. Within this context, ADVR has created a comprehensive system of personnel development, assuring the maintenance of a team of qualified professionals and paraprofessionals appropriate to the service needs of Alaskans with disabilities.

ADVR assures through the implementation, monitoring and management of the CSPD that only those individuals who meet the personnel standards of the CSPD are considered qualified rehabilitation professionals. These are the only individuals who are allowed to determine the requirement for the need of VR services; the approval of an IPE; the approval of IPE amendments; and the determination that an individual's employment outcome is satisfactory.

Data System of Personnel and Personnel Development

ADVR annually collects and evaluates data pertinent to the personnel recruitment and development of the organization. Narrative, statistical, and anecdotal information are gleaned from individual and regional case reviews (including client satisfaction surveys and consumer forums); performance evaluations; training need surveys; individual employee development plans; ADVR's strategic plan; CAP annual reports; and public comments obtained in public hearings and testimony received by the Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities (GCERPD).

ADVR's Training and Staff Development (TSD) team, led by the Assistant Chief of Field Services, analyzes the data collected to identify the professional development needs of division staff. This team evaluates the cost and benefit of training and development activities and plans training that is relevant to the enhancement of the capabilities of ADVR staff and is responsible for developing plans for individual and group training. The TSD team also works closely with Tribal VR programs to collaborate on training activities.

Personnel Data and Projections: ADVR currently has adequate professional and paraprofessional support staff to serve all eligible consumers. Caseload size is monitored on a monthly basis by the Field Services Management Council in order to maintain manageable caseloads and to ensure quality service. The mix of paraprofessional and professional staff is analyzed on a regular basis throughout the year to ensure personnel are appropriately placed.

ADVR staff and caseload statistics are as follows:

The following reflects the high level of commitment to personnel development:

- ADVR has 39 counseling positions:
 - Eighteen counselors are CRCs;
 - Three counselors are eligible to sit for the CRC;
 - Three counselors are participating graduate programs working towards a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling;
 - Two counselors are expected to begin graduate programs in the fall 2009;
 - Two counselors are sitting for the Spring CRC exam and three are expected to sit in Fall 08;
 - Five counselors have not yet committed to a graduate program, however they are exploring all of their options; and
 - Three positions are currently vacant.
- ADVR has 27 paraprofessional positions in support of counselors:
 - One VRA is eligible to sit for the CRC
 - One VRA is currently participating in an RSA sponsored graduate program.
- ADVR has six evaluator positions:
 - One evaluator is a CRC
 - One evaluator is a CVE;
 - One evaluator recently sat for the CVE; and
 - Two evaluators are enrolled in academic programs for CVE or CRC certification.
- Administrative/Professional Staff
 - Two staff are participating in graduate programs working towards a Master's degree in rehabilitation counseling; and
 - One staff member is sitting for the CRC exam in Spring 08.
- At mid-year, the caseload size ranged from 43 – 114 with the average being 59.

ADVR's client base has remained relatively constant for the past few years. With the current strong Alaskan economy projected to continue for coming years, we do not expect to see a dramatic influx of clients. Therefore, we anticipate our current staffing patterns will be adequate to serve all individuals over the next five years. ADVR does anticipate continued problems with hiring CRC counselors and foresees the need to support staff in graduate programs while simultaneously maximizing the availability of RSA grant opportunities.

Personnel Development: Alaska does not have an institution of higher education that offers rehabilitation coursework leading to a Master degree. The University of Alaska offers programs leading to Human Services Applied Associates and Bachelor degrees. DVR paraprofessional staff enrolls in programs through this institution on a regular basis.

ADVR has and continues to support ADVR staff in distance education graduate programs in rehabilitation counseling in order to meet the CRC certification requirements.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

ADVR continues to experience staff turnover at a consistent rate, partially due to normal staff departure. In addition, ADVR continues to experience the loss of professional staff due to retirement. This number remains fairly consistent as more staff continue to meet retirement eligibility. Current statistics indicate that 30% of experienced professional staff are eligible to retire over the next five years. No Alaska university has a graduate program in rehabilitation counseling, therefore, distance education opportunities are highly utilized by ADVR staff. Additionally, no distance education program is available in the North Pacific Northwest either. The specific lack of higher education in the State has created challenges for the recruitment of qualified rehabilitation counselors. Out-of-state recruitment is also challenging as Alaskan salaries have not kept pace with some parts of the country and out of state hire is only approved once in-state hire has been unsuccessful.

Staff recruitment is conducted in accordance with the provisions of Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The State of Alaska employment statutes provide for "provisional hire" which allows ADVR, as well as other state agencies, an additional opportunity to take affirmative action to employ individuals with disabilities.

ADVR utilizes several recruitment strategies in addition to provisional hire. One of the more successful strategies is to hire entry or journey level rehabilitation counselors who are highly supervised and have limited authority and assist them in obtaining the education and certification required to become a qualified rehabilitation counselor. ADVR also hires and recruits individuals with Master's degrees in Counseling and assists them with obtaining the core rehabilitation course work to become eligible to sit for the CRC examination.

This same strategy is often successful with paraprofessional staff. ADVR also recruits from Tribal VR programs, community rehabilitation and social service internship programs. ADVR also offers paid or non-paid internships to rehabilitation counseling graduate students interested in relocating to Alaska. ADVR has also participated in the Region X recruitment initiative.

ADVR completed a reclassification study through the Division of Personnel and successfully raised salary levels for all counselor positions. This monumental task will allow the division to attract and hire more desirable applicants.

ADVR is currently negotiating with the Division of Personnel to implement a maintenance agreement for those counselors who currently do not meet the division's CSPD personnel standard. We are hopeful to receive Department of Personnel support and that staff will meet the standard by 2014. Staff who currently do not meet the standard require additional supervision and review of all non-delegable functions including eligibility determination, plan and plan amendment approval, and determination of successful employment outcome. In addition, the

division is simultaneously working on a condition of hire agreement for new hires. The expectation is that counselor I's will meet the standard within six years of hire.

Personnel Standards

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) requires ADVR to establish personnel standards that assure personnel are adequately prepared and trained. Strategies developed by ADVR to ensure the retraining, recruiting and hiring of personnel include:

- Attendance at local job/career fairs;
- Formation of an in-house training and staff development team;
- Offering paid and non-paid graduate internships;
- Supporting rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for clients;
- Supporting staff to obtain the academic requirements by CRC;
- Providing CRC accredited training to maintain CRC certification and to provide for general staff development;
- Utilizes the training resources and support of the Region X Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) and the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER).
- Presentations to graduate level counseling students; and
- The development of a career advancement system that integrates educational and credentialing required and measures knowledge and skills in hiring and promotional consideration. This system is consistent with the national certification of rehabilitation counselors.

The State of Alaska does not require State licensure requirements for rehabilitation counseling, therefore, ADVR has adopted the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) academic degree requirements.

ADVR expects that newly hired personnel who do not meet the CRC academic requirements will do so within six years of employment. During this six year period, these employees are closely supervised by CRCs and are not considered rehabilitation professionals. At a minimum, newly hired personnel must have a Bachelor's degree.

ADVR has provided existing personnel the opportunity to participate in rehabilitation counseling graduate programs. The expectation is that all coursework will be completed within a five year

time period, allowing staff one year to complete the CRC examination. Three staff members have not completed all required coursework within the allotted timeframe. All of these individuals are within five years of retirement. These three staff members in addition to all newly hired staff require close supervision and review of non-delegable counselor functions. ADVR continues to provide on-going training and monitoring of these individuals and is formally negotiating with the Division of Personnel to implement a condition of hire agreement.

As part of ADVR's strategic planning process, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of ADVR's recruitment and training practices is completed. Strategies to improve recruitment and training are identified and incorporated in the plan.

Staff Development

Annual comprehensive human resource training and development plans are based on the needs assessment process, budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcomes of program evaluations. Needs assessment includes information from individual and regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys and consumer forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee staff development plans, organizational plans, CAP annual reports and supervisor and employee training needs surveys. Each individual in the agency has an employee development plan that is updated on a regular basis. As part of the process, data is compiled by the HR specialist and used in determining group and individual training activities.

In-service training recently delivered to all staff includes:

- Career counseling and assessment techniques;
- Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors
- Medical aspects Post Traumatic Stress Disorder;
- Rehabilitation in a 'Recovery Mode';
- IDEA and transition services;
- Assistive technology; and
- Counseling Techniques using Motivational Interviewing

Training activities for ADVR staff are also coordinated with WIA partners through Job Centers. There is a statewide training team of Job Center participants of which ADVR is a member. ADVR staff are trained on issues affecting our clients such as individualized training accounts. ADVR in turn has provided training to Job Center partners on assistive technology and disability related issues.

To keep counselors and paraprofessionals current on the latest research and enhance their knowledge-base, on-going training is available. Much of the training is delivered via teleconferences primarily from the Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation, Western Washington University. CRC credit is available for these trainings and recent topics have included:

- Case Management Practices

- Test Interpretation;
- Self-employment initiatives
- Job Development

Annually, staff receive training from medical professionals on the medical aspects of disabilities such as mental health issues, neuropsychological evaluation, and diabetes. ADVR also trains staff annually through regional trainings on new initiatives and changes in the law. The training team utilizes information from entities and organizations such as The Institute on Rehabilitation Issues, The National Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

Additionally, members of the Training and Staff Development Team maintain relations with the Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program based at Western Washington University. This program provides training on current issues and research such as performance based outcomes.

Individual Communication Needs

The Division employs a full-time staff member who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) to facilitate communication with the deaf and hard of hearing consumers and staff. The Division also supports staff to gain skills in ASL to increase the number of staff who are able to communicate with consumers who are deaf. Tele-interpreting is also widely used. When possible, consumers with specific language skills are referred to staff possessing those secondary language skills. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development has a list of fluent interpreters for in-demand languages such as Tagalog, Russian and Spanish. Staff will also solicit the services from a qualified language interpreter when needed. The Division relies heavily on the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs to coach our staff on the cultural appropriate methods of communication with our Alaska native consumers.

Coordination of Personnel Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

ADVR consistently collaborates with the State of Alaska, Department of Education on numerous staff development and training initiatives. We currently participate in:

- **Teacher Internship Project.** During the summer months, school district transition/special education teachers participate in a 125 hour paid, structured training program to learn about Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation. Teachers from around the state participate in this yearly project. This year, six teachers from Fairbanks, Juneau, Wasilla and Anchorage participated. The division transition coordinator provides the initial training and then teams the teachers with a VR counselor. Teachers learn about the entire vocational rehabilitation process from orientation to eligibility, plan development and case closure. They observe DVR counselors meeting with clients, learn about eligibility criteria, disabling barriers that need to be overcome and the array of services that DVR can provide to clients in order to facilitate employment. The teachers also participate in vocational evaluations in order to broaden their scope of understanding about tools to assist in

evaluating an individual's interests, abilities, capabilities, and goals in the vocational arena. Teachers are also exposed to agencies that DVR contracts or collaborates with. DVR counselors and special education teachers from across Alaska have formed teams to improve transition services for students with disabilities. The Teacher Internship Project is a key initiative designed to strengthen these teams. As a result:

- Students will be able to receive a continuation of services not usually available during the summer months.
 - Teachers will increase their knowledge of vocational rehabilitation and will share this knowledge with their peers.
 - DVR will benefit from a more collaborative working relationship with special education staff which will allow it to better serve students transitioning from school to work or post-school activities.
- ADVR Transition Services. ADVR and local school districts throughout Alaska work together, in conjunction with students and their families, to coordinate activities that will result in successful employment outcomes. These "transition services" are designed to facilitate a high school student's smooth transfer from school to agencies such as the Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR). Currently, DVR counselors are assigned to work with a specific schools and/or school districts. They work in the schools on an itinerate basis. Rural or village schools may work with VR counselors via telephonically and through the special education teacher. The transition coordinator holds monthly teleconferences with all VR counselors who work with youth. These calls allow counselors to share information; best practices or strategies that are working form them.
 - Statewide Special Education Conference. Annually ADVR registers VR counselors who work with youth to participate in this conference. This again provides an opportunity for VR counselors to learn about special education topics such as; disability topics, assistive technology, accommodations and support services and the requirements of IDEA and a plethora of other special education topics. ADVR counselors also take the time to build and strengthen relationships with special education teachers and district staff.
 - Special Education Director Conference. The ADVR transition coordinator and the Chief of Rehabilitation Services participate in this conference annually. In addition to attending the conference, the transition coordinator has been a session presenter and maintains a vendor booth. This gives the school district special education directors an opportunity to learn more about VR services and establish relationships with special educators from the 53 different school districts in the state.
 - DVR's transition coordinator is a member of the following youth boards:
 - State Independent Living Youth Committee
 - Alaska Workforce Investment Board Youth Council
 - Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education

Attachment 4.11(b)

Annual Estimates

ADVR was not operating under an Order of Selection during FY2007. There was adequate funding and qualified staff to serve all eligible individuals. We anticipate this situation will continue. ADVR monitors expenditures and obligations throughout the year as well as staffing patterns to ensure our ability to serve all eligible individuals.

Analysis of funding streams:

- The FY2009 Governor's budget beginning July 1, 2008 has ADVR funded at FY2008 level for case services with additional funds to cover additional personal services costs due to new union contracts.
- ADVR is cautiously optimistic the federal funding will continue with no decrease in COLA or Supported Employment funds.
- Social security receipts are not expected to increase in FY2009 based upon the last two year's receipts. Alaska's slow down in SSA receipts seems to be following a national trend. We are very interested to see the impact of the new Ticket-to-Work regulations.
- There is adequate funding for supported employment services.
- Pressure will be put on Title I funds in FY2009 as the number of plans written in FY2007 increased by 2.8% from FY2006 and we have less carry forward.

ADVR continues to distribute funds to the counselor level with oversight by regional managers. We believe this method of budgeting provides more accountability and better financial management by counselors, thus maximizing case service dollars. As stewards of public funds, ADVR counselors work to utilize comparable benefits.

The following are actual numbers from FY2007 and projections for FY2009:

	2007 Actuals	2009 Projections
Eligible Individuals	1,705	1,700
Plans Written	797	800
Plans Implemented	2,279	2,300
Title I Participants	3,538	3,600
Title VI Participants	139	140
Title I Case Service Expenditures	\$4,509,242	\$4,880,000
Title VI Case Service Expenditures	\$187,879	\$200,000

Attachment 4.11(c)(4)

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation plans to distribute the all of the funds received under Section 622 of the Act for the provision of Supported Employment (SE) services statewide through the division's MIS to individual counselor budgets. ADVR anticipates adequate SE funds to provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals who require (SE) services.

ADVR estimates 140 individuals will receive SE funded services during FY2009.

Goals, strategies, and priorities for the maintenance and expansion of SE services include the following:

1. Emphasize community based integrated employment settings rather than sheltered employment
1. Pursue increased long-term state funding for SE
2. Work with the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health to reduce the wait list for the funding of long-term SE services
3. Work with the community mental health system to increase and reinstate work related programs within community mental health programs statewide
4. Investigate the viability of using Social Security work incentives and the revised Ticket to Work Program a means of client/self funded long term support.

Attachment 4.11(e)(2)

Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Activities

VR Program Goals – Measure, Outcomes and Strategies

Progress made in achieving the goals identified in the Alaska FY2007 State plan:

Goal 1 - Serve all individuals eligible for vocational rehabilitation services.

Measure: On an order of selection

Outcome: ADVR met this goal. We were able to serve all those eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and did not go on an order of selection.

Strategies: Reports from the AWARE case management system are used at all levels of the division to track and monitor resources. VR counselors are trained on the principles of informed choice within the context of providing needed services on IPEs versus services that are only wanted. Similar benefits are maximized.

Goal 2 - Provide efficient and timely services.

Measure: From case reviews: time spent in IPE development and application status.

Outcome: Results were high acceptable and acceptable.

Strategies: All VR counselors and support staff are trained on the use of reports from the AWARE system to track activity due dates. Data from case reviews and MIS is analyzed to identify trends or best practices in service delivery. Provide feedback on a regular basis to counselors to encourage continued efforts for timely services.

Goal 3 - Maintain current number of individuals closed with an employment outcome.

Measure: 527 successful closures.

Outcome: ADVR met this goal with 529 successful closures.

Strategies: Educate entire staff and reinforce through yearly reminders at regional trainings on the importance of meeting the federal standards and indicators and the state's missions and measures of which this goal is included in each of those. Through entertaining reminders, get staff to own the success of this goal. Set yearly performance for each VR counselor. Management closely monitors progress toward meeting performance goals. Outreach to community organizations to ensure quality referrals to maintain a constant flow of individuals into the VR system. ADVR has seen a slight decrease in referrals over the past year due to a solid Alaskan economy

Goal 4 - Generate quality outcomes with an emphasis on careers to produce a living wage.

Measure 1: Average wages at closure as a percentage of the federal poverty level. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board defines as a level of self-sufficiency or living wage for adults at 175% of the federal poverty level.

Outcome: ADVR met this goal; the average wages at closure was 226% of the federal poverty level.

Strategies: Train counselors on principles of informed choice and what constitutes a living wage. Provide feedback to counselors on the increases in wages from application to closure.

Measure 2: The average wage of employed individuals exiting the program is 65% of the State's average wage.

Outcome: ADVR met this goal; the average wage as a percent of the State's average wage was 67%.

Strategies: ADVR infuses the principles of careers rather than jobs into the culture of the agency through training of counselors and supporting client choice principles.

Goal 5 - Maximize the principles of informed choice throughout the vocational rehabilitation process.

Measure: Case review results.

Outcome: Ninety-seven percent of the cases reviewed documented the principles of informed choice implemented throughout the rehabilitation process. This is an increase of 7% over the prior case review cycle.

Strategies: ADVR rewrote our policy on informed choice and all staff were trained on the new policy at regional trainings. The principles of informed choice continue to be emphasized with staff at the debriefings for the case reviews.

Goal 6 - Expand and solidify collaborative efforts with schools, Tribal VR programs, community rehabilitation programs and WIA partners.

Measure: Types of interaction with schools, TVR, CRPs and WIA partners

Outcome:

Schools: Cooperative Agreements with all school districts in place; additional counselors assigned to schools; summer internships for special education teachers has been expanded from the Anchorage area to three more regions.

Tribal VR programs: Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation assigned as a liaison to Tribal consortium; tribal staff invited to ADVR training; and working of joint cases continues to be a priority.

CRPs: Review of CRP performance and utilization has become as part of the case review process.

WIA partners: Cross training of job center staff; collaborated on grants such as customized employment and disability program navigators; developed job center teams around assessment and training.

Strategies:

Schools: All school districts have VR counselors assigned to them. Summer internship program for special education teachers was reinstated and expanded using funding from the Department of Education and Early Development. Assign transition coordinator to develop relationship with special education directors. Transition coordinator represents ADVR and makes presentation at special education directors' annual conference. Transition coordinator collaborates with various community partners who have youth and employment as a focus.

Tribal VR programs: Establish a high level position within the division to be the liaison with the tribal directors. Support the efforts of the tribal programs in writing their grants for continued funding. Include all tribal counselors in VR trainings. Maximize the number joint VR-TVR cases. Continue to support VR-TVR consortium

CRPs: Include the division's CRP specialist on the ADVR case review team. Form a work team within the division to define the overall needs around CRPs. Invite CRPs to participate in ADVR training; work with the Center for Human Development and the RECEP to develop a training model for CRPs; and revise the CRP service provider agreement.

WIA partners: Reinstate the training academy in the One-Stop Job Centers; develop statewide teams to prevent partners from duplicating efforts and expenditure of resource and increase jointly shared cases.

Goal 7 - Work with job center partners and employers to provide integrated services to meet the needs of employers and businesses.

Measure: Job center teams formed in job centers in various locations statewide

Outcome: ADVR initiated the Integrated Employment Services Committee (IES) within the Job Centers to establish unified marketing strategies to employers; cross train staff to better understand the assortment of services available to consumers to maximize their success; and share job leads in order to have a single point of contact for employers. This approach has been implemented in the Juneau job center. The IES in Anchorage continues to be active and has added more employers.

Strategies: ADVR staff are members of the Anchorage One-Stop Job Center Employer committee which provides outreach to employers. Disseminate Anchorage Job Center employer model to other regions in the state.

Goal 8 - Increase the number of Centers for Independent Living (CIL) consumers who are jointly served by ADVR who are seeking employment.

Measure: Number of joint cases

Outcome: ADVR has continued to work with the CILs to provide the employment focus for people who are most significantly disabled. In FY2007 there was a 41% of joint CIL and DVR applicants.

Strategies: Include an employment focus in the SPIL. Support CILs in efforts to obtain increased state funding. ADVR continues its strong representation on the SILC.

Goal 9 - Increase services to youth who experience a disability who are transitioning from school to work.

Measure: Increase in youth as ADVR consumers and an increase in information and referral services for youth oriented agencies.

Outcome: 15% of the FY 2007 applicants were youth; informational booth at the Statewide Special Education Conference; six ADVR staff attended the Special Education Conference; three special education teachers participated in the ADVR/Dept. of Education teacher internship program.

Strategies: All school districts continue to have VR counselors assigned to them. Summer internship program for special education teachers continues. Consider adding a student component to the internship program, thus encouraging a more student friendly atmosphere for sharing information. Transition coordinator and staff continue to participate in the special education directors' annual conference. Transition coordinator and assigned ADVR staff participate with various community partners who have youth and employment grants.

Goal 10 - Employ and develop highly skilled and qualified rehabilitation staff.

Measure: Number of staff who are certified rehabilitation counselors (CRCs) or who are in graduate programs to become CRCs and increase counselor salaries to retain qualified staff.

Outcome: Alaska Division of Personnel completed the VR counselor study, resulting in pay raises for VR counselors; three ADVR counselors obtained CRC certification; and four employees were enrolled in distance learning graduate programs.

Strategies: Support VR staff lacking the academic credentials to sit for the CRC by paying for tuition and books for those classes. Provide ongoing CRC certified training for CRCs in order to maintain their certification. ADVR markets VR as a career choice at job fairs.

Supported Employment Program Goals – Measures, Outcomes and Strategies

All eligible individuals for whom Supported Employment was an appropriate employment option received VR services.

Emphasize community based integrated employment settings rather than sheltered employment

Measure: Number of individual closed with long term supports in a SE employment outcome who are employed in an integrated setting.

Outcome: In FFY2007, there were no individuals closed in extended employment or in a non-integrated setting.

Strategies: ADVR encourages its counselors to work with those programs providing long-term supports to provide integrated employment opportunities.

Pursue increased long-term state funding for SE services

Measure: Collaborative effort to increase in the Division of Behavioral Health's budget request for additional long term support funds.

Outcome: A group including representatives from ADVR, Behavioral Health and the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education was formed to identify specific funding needs and strategies for increased state funding for long-term supports. Funding increments were included in the FY2008 budget request.

Strategies: ADVR collaborated with those entities within the State whose budget funds long-term support services. Behavioral Health garnered the support of disability groups within the State to work with their legislative representatives to support the increased funding.

Work with the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health to reduce the wait list for the funding of long-term SE services

Measure: ADVR and other stake holders are meeting to address the wait list issue.

Outcome: A work group has been formed to address this issue.

Strategies: The first step is getting a dialog at the Director's level regarding this topic. This has occurred, but due to demanding schedules, this continues to be a challenge.

Work with the community mental health system to increase and reinstate work related programs within community mental health programs statewide

Measure: Employment related programs are included within community mental health programs

Outcome: ADVR staff member assigned to create statewide group of stakeholders around this issue. Additional funds were secured within the mental health system budget for a program in Juneau to begin in FY2009.

Strategies: Assign adequate ADVR staff to this project. Work with mental health providers around funding issues.

Investigate the viability of using Social Security work incentives and the revised Ticket to Work Program as a means of client/self funded long term support.

Measure: Determine what programs are available and disseminate appropriate information to staff.

Outcome: ADVR staff have been assigned to research information

Strategies: Use current information on Ticket to Work to determine possible alternatives within the process.

Standards and Indicators

ADVR met or exceeded all the federal standards and indicators. ADVR remains committed to working with people with disabilities to obtain jobs with good wages, to provide services in a timely manner and to maintain productivity. ADVR staff is well aware of these values and strives to meet a high level of performance. Information on the performance on these measures is disseminated to all staff on a regular basis.

Utilization of the Funds Reserved for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Consistent with the requirements of section 101(a) (18) of the Act, ADVR uses the funds reserved for innovation and expansion to support the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

SRC

Alaska DVR provides funding for the SRC expenditures including travel, lodging, advertising for town meetings and public testimony, supplies, meeting room rentals, real time captioning, and costs related to consumer satisfaction surveys.

Funds Allocated: \$67,000

SILC

Alaska DVR provides funding for the operations of the SILC. ADVR has also granted 100% of Independent Living Part B and Older Blind funds to the Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

Funds Allocated:

SILC: \$176,000

CILs: \$1,385,854